



## Promoting Peace in Burma

### Opportunity

Changes in Burma provide an opening for investment, promoting human rights, and political and economic reform. These opportunities hinge on building an inclusive political system where parties use dialogue, not violence, to address ethnic identity and reconciliation issues. Longstanding conflicts between the central government and ethnic minorities as well as recent flare-ups of communal violence in areas such as Rakhine State threaten a lasting peace. The U.S. government can help break cycles of violence, particularly in high-risk ethnic minority strongholds, to advance national reconciliation and a lasting political solution between the Government of Burma and diverse ethnic and religious groups.

### How CSO Works

CSO supports Department of State conflict prevention and crisis response efforts through locally grounded analysis, strategic planning, and operational support for local partners. CSO deploys civilian talent at the subnational level to catalyze local efforts to build civilian security and connect program implementation to policymaking.

### CSO in Burma

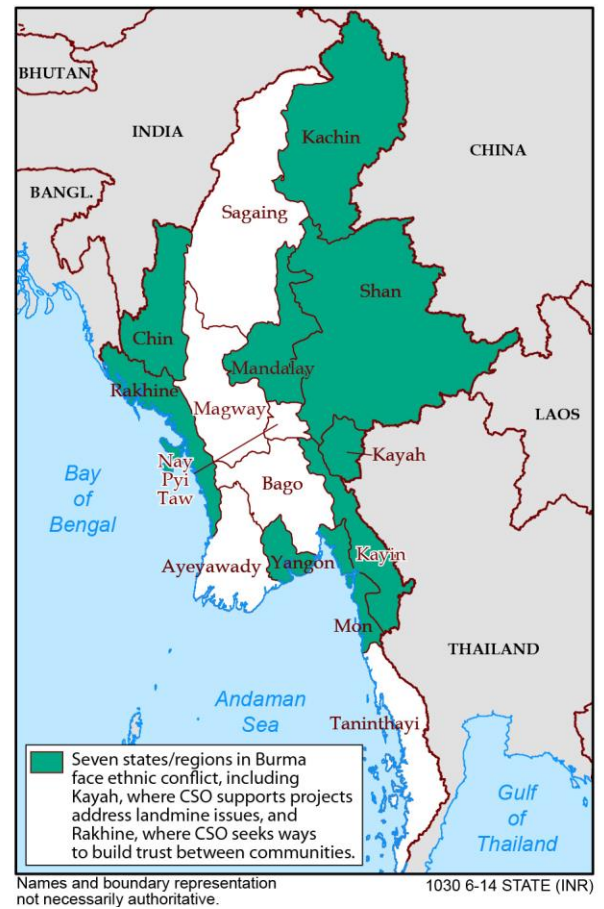
In Burma, CSO officers provide conflict and reconciliation expertise to Embassy Rangoon, focusing particularly on Rakhine State, trust-building through humanitarian mine action, and the peace process. In Washington, a CSO team advises the Department of State on Burma's peace and reconciliation processes as well as on local conflict.

### Objectives

- **Support efforts to reduce violence and build community relations**, especially in Rakhine State.
- **Build trust** between ethnic groups and the government through issues of common concern, including landmines.
- **Empower civil society** to participate more fully in peace-related initiatives.

**U.S. Support for Violence Reduction:** CSO contributes to U.S. efforts to reduce violence and strengthen community relations.

- **Increase U.S. Government understanding of ethnic minority groups' priorities and concerns.** CSO helps the Embassy sharpen U.S. understanding of states facing ethnic armed conflict, increase





## United States Department of State Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

engagement and trust with ethnic nationalities, and demonstrate U.S. support for the vulnerable, particularly in Rakhine State.

- **Help shape U.S. Government approaches that support Embassy Rangoon's mission goals.** CSO's conflict analysis, strategic planning, and violence prevention recommendations are incorporated into post's approaches.
- **Facilitate donor and diplomatic coordination.** CSO helped establish regular donor meetings to coordinate humanitarian mine action and reinforce conflict-sensitive approaches.

**Build Trust:** The government, army, civil society, and ethnic minorities share a common interest in reducing the number of landmines. CSO supports the Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and Embassy efforts to use mine-risk education and survivor assistance to build trust and support positive interactions between civilians and the military in ethnic states.

- **Build momentum for mine risk education and survivor assistance** as a trust-building tool.
  - In coordination with the Kayah State government and armed groups, CSO is facilitating small grants to community-based organizations so they can identify and develop landmine-related projects.
  - In May 2013, CSO convened Burmese Government officials, armed groups, and civil society in Kayah State to build broader community dialogue around mine action.
  - In May 2013, CSO organized a workshop for journalists to improve the accuracy of conflict coverage and cast mine action as a contributor to national reconciliation.
  - In an October 2012 speech, the U.S. Ambassador reinforced to mine action organizations and the Government of Burma that humanitarian mine action should be inclusive, conflict-sensitive, and coordinated.
- **Advance Mine Risk Education and Survivor Assistance.** In cooperation with a number of Department of State and USAID offices, including the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, CSO facilitated the obligation of \$3 million to build trust and strengthen civil society around mine risk education and survivor assistance.

### Empower Civil Society:

- **Strengthen civil society's ability to engage in peace-related initiatives.** CSO helped organize a "TechCamp" in January 2014 to introduce local civil society, including members of ethnic minority groups, to new technologies that should strengthen their ability to mitigate conflict.
- **Empower women and marginalized groups.** Through roundtables, CSO helped to advance gender equality and disabled people's rights and inclusion in conflict resolution.

